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Announcements

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Daily News Wednesday, March 04, 2009

Rich Media Website Brings ASL to Life for Deaf Kids

The Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD) and Toronto-based digital media company marblemedia have teamed up to create the first children's animated American Sign Language (ASL) dictionary.

The dictionary will allow Deaf children to look up vocabulary according to their own, primary language - ASL along with the English vocabulary counterpart - without having to rely on adults for definitions.

Thanks to funding from the Inukshuk Wireless Learning Plan Fund, this rich media website will enable young children, parents, siblings and friends to interact with and learn through the use of live-action video and animation. The Inukshuk Wireless Learning Plan Fund supports the development of new online learning content and has committed to funding the first portion of the project.

The interactive site aims to be a shared learning environment for Deaf and hearing children, 5 to 7 years of age, along with the adults in their lives. Another key feature of the site is its ability to simultaneously enable hearing children to learn ASL by finding words according to the English alphabet in a creative way with full live-action ASL in motion rather than through photographs.




"We have a long-standing history with the CCSD that started with our TV show and website for Deaf children - *deafplanet.com*. It is a pleasure to be able to collaborate with them again on such an inspiring and important project," said Mark Bishop, Partner and Executive Producer of marblemedia.

"CCSD is delighted to produce this groundbreaking learning resource with marblemedia," said Joanne Cripps, CYW, Co-Director, DEAF CULTURE CENTRE, Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. "We are also engaging award-winning South African Deaf animator, Braam Jordaan and renowned ASL linguist, Dr. Sam Supalla to create what promises to be a revolutionary product!" said Dr. Anita Small, Co-Director of the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE, Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf.

marblemedia is a content creation company on the forefront of television and new media production, devoted to telling stories that entertain and engage audiences across all platforms. marblemedia is the recipient of the 2007 Lions Gate/Maple Pictures Innovative Producer Award and the 2008 Canadian New Media Award for Company of the Year. Some of our notable projects include the teen competition series *The Adrenaline Project*; the hit preschool series *This is Daniel Cook* and *This is Emily Yeung*; the first television series and website in American Sign Language, *deafplanet.com*; the mobile short film anthology *Shorts in Motion: The Art of Seduction*; and *Taste Buds* a kids cooking and food adventure series. Upcoming projects for the independent producers include *The Dating Guy*, *Camerahead* and *Skatoony* <<http://www.marblemedia.com>>

About the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD)

CCSD is the only national cultural organization for Deaf Canadians. A non-profit organization supported by private donations, the CCSD represents over 450,000 Canadians and serves many more through its educational programs, cultural activities and Deaf heritage resources. The CCSD strives to preserve, encourage and advance the cultural interests of Canada's Deaf population, promotes better understanding between Deaf and hearing adults and children and promotes literacy for Deaf children.

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